Curtis, Joseph

Jan. 28, 1956

DAR Article Tells Of Famous Edgar Resident

Paris, Ill-Beacon-News

An article concerning early Edgar county history was given by Mrs. Sarah Curtis Moss, Sutherland avenue, at the meeting of Madam Rachel Edgar chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, held last Thursday at the home of Mrs. Chester Boland. Her talk pertained to her grandfather, Joseph Curtis, first nurseryman of Illinois, also the first minister in Edgar county.

A copy of Mrs. Moss' talk will be placed in the Illinois DAR library. Herewith is her full sketch of Joseph Curtis, pioneer of Edgar county:

Tells Of Early Life

"Joseph Curtis was born May 29, 1786 in Burlington county, N. J. His father moved to Virginia but after a short time the call of the west came to him and he moved his family to a permanent home in Adams county, Ohio, where he secured a home on the Ohio river. Here he farmed and tended the young fruit trees he had brought with him, little dreaming that they would be the inspiration for his only son's lifework, that of a nurseryman. Here Joseph grew up, working in the orchard and on the farm. An uncle had taught him to cleft graft and splice graft. Armed with this knowledge of horticulture, having never seen a nursery, he started an experimental one on his father's farm. Here he labored for 15 years, getting the choicest scions for grafting and budding, gathering the best fruit seeds from near and far, testing them in nursery and orchard for good new varieties. His fame largely rests on his discovery of two new methods of root grafting; he freely taught these methods to eastern nurserymen who sold the information for $100. These methods, in use for many years, were invented when Curtis was 16 years old.

"Curtis was reared in a Christian home and at maturity became an itinerant Methodist preacher. On his father's side of the family his ancestors were Quakers, going back to the very beginning of the Quaker religion in 1648, but his father had married out of the church, so Joseph became a Methodist. For about a year, he with a preacher companion, traveled about holding religious services at the popular camp meetings in the summer time, at occasional churches at other times of the year. At a camp meeting he met his future wife, Hannah Shelby, whom he married in 1815.

In Salt Business

"Some time before his marriage he had gone into the salt merchandising business on the Ohio river. He wished to establish a home but the meagre pay of an itinerant preacher was not enough. At first he used a pirogue, which was a large canoe, and as he prospered he bought a keel boat, then a second one. Goods bought in Cincinnati were traded for salt at the Kanawhua Salt Works in West Virginia. There was a good market for salt along the Ohio river and the rivers of Ohio state.

"In the meantime, desiring to increase his capital, he established a store at Manchester, O., his wife being one of the clerks. Later he decided to sell it on credit to a trusted friend who failed, Joseph losing his entire investment. This, together with the strenuous times following the War of 1812, forced him to sell everything he had. Being poor is no disgrace if you have the stout heart and willingness to overcome it, which this young couple did have.

"The couple moved in with his parents for a short time. Joseph had heard of the fertile land farther west so the couple moved to Fort Harrison, now Terre Haute, where Mrs. Curtis had a brother and sister living. What were they to do for money to buy a keel boat and provisions for the journey? There were no railroads, overland trails were difficult so the keel boat was a popular means of transportation in those days. It was a heavy covered freight boat with no sails, being navigated with poles or oars.

"To obtain money for the purchase of a boat, Hannah, always self-reliant and resourceful, employed a young couple to help her dry peaches and apples from the Curtis orchards. All summer and fall they labored, drying the fruit in a kiln that Joseph had made. When the task was completed they had 250 bushels of dried fruit which was as good as gold at Ft. Harrison where the people were fruit hungry. They also had for sale their nursery stock, cider and late keeping apples.

Cuts Virgin Timber

"To obtain a keel boat and wooden boat for the journey, Joseph contracted to cut a tract of virgin timber owned by his brother-in-law for $20 per acre, boating the wood to Maysville, Ky. He engaged a crew of wood cutters, working with them through the fall and winter. The time of departure was drawing near and the job not being completed, Hannah boarded the keel boat and prepared dinner for the workmen to save time.

"It was fortunate that both were on board for one night in February they felt a great thumping at their boat; the ice of the Ohio river was breaking. Joseph could not save the boats alone, so Hannah picked up her six-month-old baby and ran a mile in the snow at midnight to secure aid. The men fought the huge cakes of ice until dawn when they were able to move the keel boat around a bend in the river to safety but the wood boat was lost. They stayed there until the ice ran out of the river and then set out for their new home with three Curtis relatives manning the boat. They passed over the dreaded Ohio Falls without unloading their possessions which was often necessary when the river was low, necessitating overland hauling past the Falls.

"When Mr. and Mrs. Curtis arrived at the mouth of the Wabash river, two men were hired as it became more difficult to travel against the current; the men were paid with dried fruit. To avoid the current the boat was kept close to the river bank, long oars and bush whacking being used to navigate the boat. Bush whacking is the term used for pulling on stout bushes or by pulling on a rope tied around trees, which was a slow process.

At Ft. Harrison

"The Curtis' arrived at Ft. Harrison on March 18, 1818, residing on their boat until a double log cabin was secured. A tract of land was purchased for the planting of nursery stock. They found a ready sale for their fruit at $3 per bushel as fruit was very scarce in the little settlement.

"Mr. Curtis now heard of the fertile land in Illinois across the river. He became acquainted with Colonel Mayo who had come to Edgar county in 1817. Curtis came to this county to make investigations with the thought of living here. He liked what he saw and bought 320 acres of government land at $1.25 per acre. This land is about one-half mile east of the present North Arm church, which was near Col. Mayo's home. The vicinity was known as the North Arm of the Grand Prairie. This was in the summer of 1818. Curtis built a log cabin and moved to his land in February in 1819. A few words about this country might be of interest. There was fertile soil, much tall prairie grass, many wild plums, grape vines, crabapple trees, strawberries, blackberries, pawpaws, persimmons and mulberries. There were also many wild animals—herds of deer, an occasional bear, foxes and so many wolves that they were a great menace. The deer, wild turkey, geese and prairie chickens furnished much of the meat for several years for the earlier settlers. The honey obtained from bee trees was an acceptable sweetening.

"We must not forget the Indians who roamed this land for a number of years after the first settlers came, but they did little harm, except some stealing. The grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. Curtis love to tell of this incident: One day an Indian came to the kitchen door and demanded food and when Hannah returned with it, the Indian threatened her with his tomahawk. When she picked up an axe and threatened him, he said 'brave squaw' and went away.

over next P. Col. 1

REFFRENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Began Orchard

"In the early spring the nursery stock was planted, the tough virgin soil was broken, corn and buckwheat planted. The meal of the latter, being scarce, brought $2 per bushel. Curtis planted fruit seeds for new varities and for young trees to graft and bud on. Mrs. Curtis often did the waxing of the grafts. He was one of the very earliest settlers but soon other families came in goodly numbers, giving trade to Curtis, who ofttimes set out a customer's orchard. As time went on he sent out wagons loaded with young trees for sale. Each wagon had a salesman and a driver. Four to six oxen pulled the wagons over the swampy roads. Trips were made in the spring and fall. If a customer had no money, and he seldom did have, his note was taken or skins of deer or coons were taken in payment. His wagons delivered many thousands of young trees over portions of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Missouri. As Curtis' fame grew, customers came to him from a 100-mile radius to buy stock at wholesale.

"In his nursery were apples for all seasons of the year, pears, cherries, plums, quinces, peaches and grapes. He introduced a number of new apple varieties, one named Hannah, for his wife. One variety he brought to Edgar county was the Milam, a great producer and universal favorite for many years. From 1840 to 1856 about 40,000 bushels of Milams were produced annually. The trees were so productive that the farmers had to store the fruit in rail cribs, protected on the outside with several inches of straw. In 1848 Curtis filled his cellar and a large apple cave with Milams, then cribbed 2,000 bushels in railpens with straw and board cover protection. The apples kept perfectly except the outer few inches, but in the spring were worth only 25 cents per bushel, mostly marketed in Ft. Harrison as cider. Most all the settlers by this time had Milams of their own. Farmers in the middle of the last century hauled apples in wagons to Chicago, Champaign and Vincennes. Almost every farmer had an orchard as in those days the trees did not need spraying for insects as today.

First Log House Burns

"The first log house of Curtis burned in 1830, which was replaced with another, having two floors, a large cellar and an attic. In later years when a son occupied the house, girl cousins found great delight in this attic for there were trunks of old dresses and bonnets for them to "dress up' in. At this home there was always a fruit drying house, a cider mill which the neighbors were privileged to use. There was a brick furnace with a long copper-bottomed pan for apple butter making. The men would make the cider and boil it down while the women peeled and quartered the apples. Much care was required to prevent the butter burning as it thickened. It was often late at night when the finished butter was stored in large stone jars or hard wooden barrels. Neighbors used the furnace and apple butter time as a sort of social affair.

"The family cooking was done at the open fireplace, but for baking there was a brick oven with a thick stone slab to place the pies and bread on. This oven had two iron doors opening into the kitchen, one for putting bread into the oven and the other for stoking the firebox with wood.

"Joseph Curtis was active in his nursery until 1845 when ill health forced him to turn the business over to his four sons who operated it for a number of years. Later they operated their own nurseries. But Curtis did not forget the religious side of life. In 1819 when he came to Edgar county to reside he established a class at Col. Mayo's home with seven in attendance. This was the first religious meeting in Edgar county and was the beginning of the congregation which formed the North Arm church. Soon the meetings were held in the Curtis home and were continued there for 24 years, or until the erection of the first North Arm church, located about one mile east of the present church. In 1823 the conference established a circuit which included the Curtis home as a regular preaching place. Joseph always was pleased to entertain the circuit riding ministers, but if for any reason one failed to appear, Joseph delivered the sermon. He was one of the preachers who assisted at the North Arm camp meeting in 1823 and his family attended meetings held at Camp Chapel for many years.

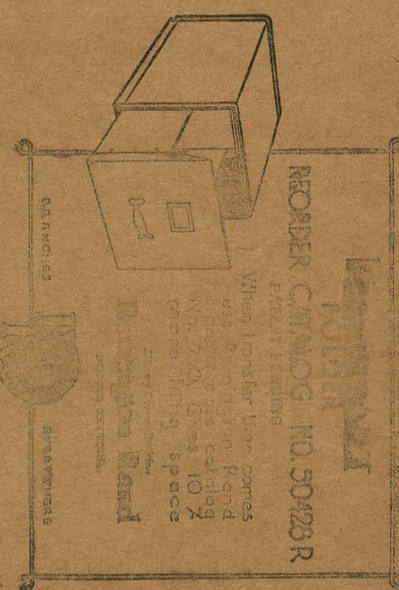
Preparation Day

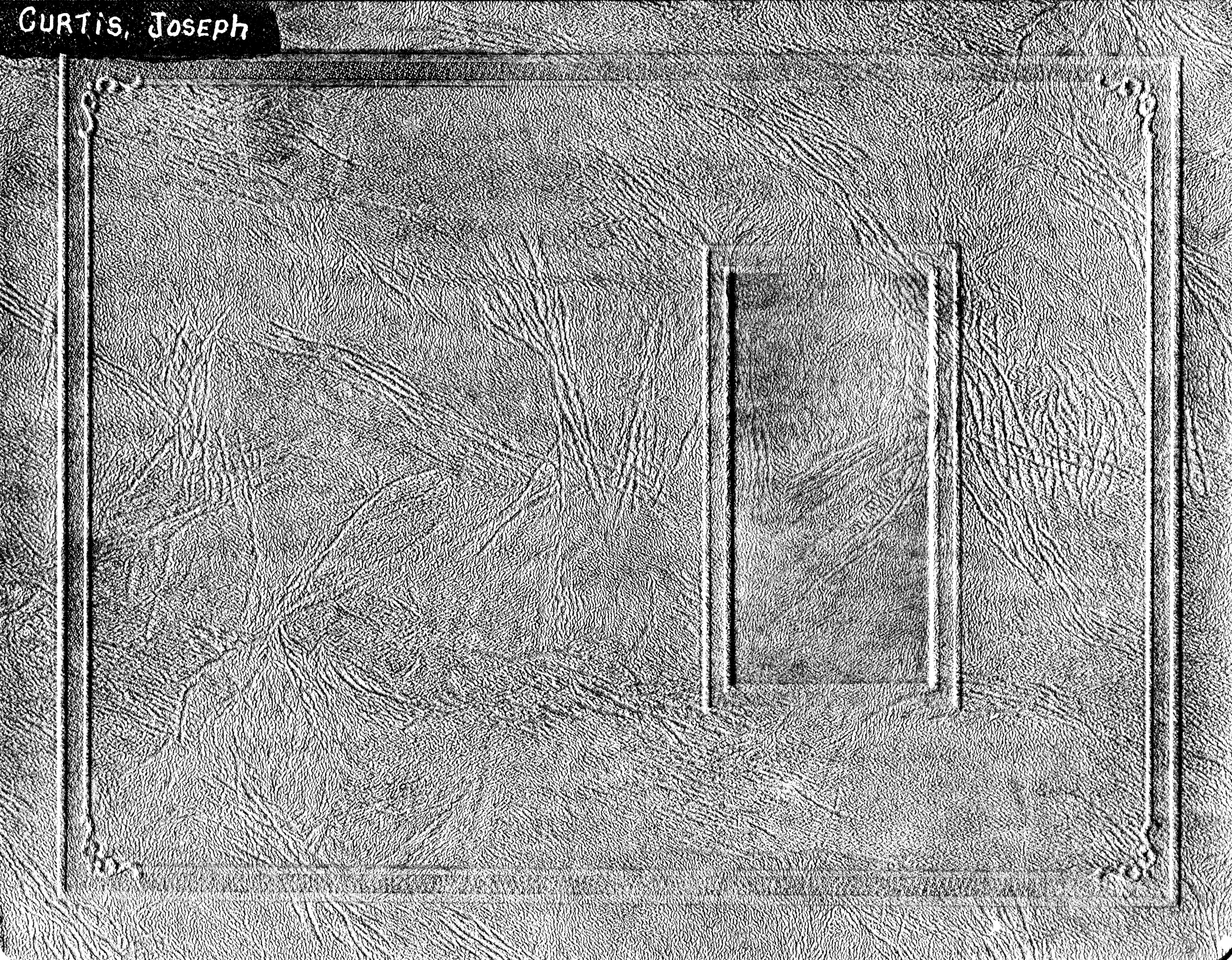
"In the Curtis home, Saturday was known as 'preparation' day when bread, meat and pies were prepared in anticipation of the dinner to be served those who came to the services from a long distance. Little cooking was done in the home on Sunday. A short time before his death Curtis was made a trustee of the newly established Methodist academy which stood on the present site of the Mayo school. This was in 1851.

"This man still lives in the memory of people. Several years ago he was honored in a broadcast from the University of Illinois radio station as the first nurseryman of the state of Illinois. In recent years representatives from the state university have come to Paris to inquire about his early history. His biography is in Bailey's Cyclopedia of Horticulture, he has been frequently mentioned in local newspapers and in 1939 the North Arm Ladies Aid society recognized Curtis as the founder of the North Arm church on its 120th anniversary. The Garden Study club several years ago planted a group of flowering crabtrees in his honor.

"Hannah, in her journal written when she was 70 years old, mentions the many difficulties and the 'hard' times they endured, which they surmounted, ending in a life of comfort. They were hopeful always and serene in their outlook of life, always having a great faith and trust in God. Joseph was 66 years old when he died in 1852 and Hannah lived 95 years of a full life, passing away in 1885.

"So ends the story of Joseph Curtis, first nurseryman of Illinois."




CURTIS, JOSEPH

REFERENCE
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Joseph Curtis, First Illinois Nurseryman

Joseph Curtis was born May 29, 1786 in Burlington County, New Jersey. His father moved to Virginia but after a short time the call of the West came to him and he moved his family to a permanent home in Adams County, Ohio where he secured a home on the great Ohio River; here he farmed and tended the young fruit trees he had bro't with him, little dreaming that they would be the inspiration for his only son's life work, that of a nursery man. Here Joseph grew up, working in the orchard and on the farm. An uncle had taught him to cleft graft and spice graft; armed with this slight knowledge of horticulture, having never seen a nursery, he started an experimental one on his father's farm. Here he labored for fifteen years, getting the choicest scions for grafting and budding, gathering the best fruit seeds from near and far, testing them in nursery and orchard for good new varieties. His fame largely rests on his discovery of two new methods of root grafting-he freely taught these methods to Eastern nurserymen who sold the information for $100; these methods were in use for many years. He was only sixteen years old when he invented them.

He was reared in a Christian home and at maturity became an itinerant Methodist preacher; on his father's side of the family his ancestors were Quakers, going back to the very beginning of the Quaker religion in 1648, but his father had married out of the church, so Joseph became a Methodist; for about a year, he with a preacher companion, traveled about holding religious services at the popular campmeetings in the summer time, at the occasional churches at other times of the year. At camp meeting he met his future wife, Hannah Shelby, whom he married in 1815; we will hear more of his religious life later on as lived in Illinois.

Some time before his marriage he had gone into the salt merchandising on the Ohio River; he wished to establish a home and the meager pay of an itinerant preacher was not enough for that. At first he used a pirogue, which was a large canoe, as he prospered he bought a keel boat, then a second one and seemed to be doing well.

He would buy goods at Cincinnati and trade them for salt at the Kanawhua Salt Works in West Virginia. There was a good market for salt along the Ohio River and the rivers of Ohio State.

In the meantime desiring to increase his capitol, he established a store at Manchester, Ohio, his wife being one of the clerks.

Later he decided to sell it on credit to a trusted friend who failed, Joseph getting nothing for it; this together with the hard times following the War of 1812, caused him to love everything he had; being poor is no disgrace if you have the stout heart and willingness to overcome it and this young couple did have.

They now went to live for a short time with his parents; he had heard much of the fertile land farther west so they decided to go to Ft. Harrison, now Terre Haute, where the wife had a brother and a sister living. What were they to do for money to buy a keel boat and provisions for the journey? There were no railroads overland trails were difficult so the keel boat was a popular means of transportation in those days. It was a heavy covered freight boat with no sails, being navigated by means of poles or oars. They must earn money to buy one.

Hannah was always self reliant and resourceful, so she employed a young man and a young woman to help her in drying the fruit in a kiln that Joseph had made. They had 250 bushels of dried fruit when they were done which they knew was good as gold at Ft. Harrison where the people were fruit hungry. They also had for sale cider and fresh late keeping apples; also had their nursery stock.

To obtain a keel boat and wood boat for the journey, Joseph contracted to cut a tract of virgin timber belonging to a brother-in-law for $20.00 an acre, boating the wood to Maysville, Kentucky. He engaged a crew of wood cutters, working with them thro' the fall and winter. The time of departure was drawing near and the job not yet done, so Hannah went on board the keel boat and gave the men their dinner to save time as they lived a mile away; they were anxious to reach the new home in time to set out the precious nursery stock.

It was fortunate that they were on board for one night in February, they felt a great thumping on their boat; the ice in the Ohio River was breaking up. Joseph alone alone could not save the boats so Hannah picked up her six months old baby and ran a mile in the snow at midnight to get held-she quaintly says she got a plenty.

The men fought the huge cakes of ice till dawn when they were able to move the keel boat around a bend in the river to safety-the wood boat was lost. They stayed here till the ice ran out of the river; after bidding relatives and friends goodbye they set out for the new home with three Curtis relatives to help man the boat.

They got over the dread Ohio Falls without unloading their possessions, as often happened when the river was low; then freight must be hauled past the falls overland.

When they arrived at the mouth of the Wabash River, two more men were hired as it would be more difficult to go against the current; the men were paid with dried fruit. To avoid the current they always kept close to the banks of the river, navigating the boat by use of long oars and bush whacking-that is by pulling on the stout bushes or by pulling on a rope tied around trees-quite a slow process.

They arrived at Ft. Harrison March 18, 1818 where they were invited to visit with Mrs. Curtis' brother and sister until a home could be secured but they thought it best to stay on board with their possessions. A double log cabin was secured, a tract of land rented for the setting out of the nursery stock. They found ready sale for their fruit at $3.00 a bushel as fruit was scarce in this little settlement.

Mr. Curtis now heard much of the fertile land in Illinois across the river-he became acquainted with Col. Mayo who had come to this county in 1817. He was invited to come over to investigate the land as a home. He came and liked what he saw and bought 320 acres of good land at $1.25 per acre. This land is about ½ mile east of the present North Arm Church, close by the home of Col. Mayo, so they had neighbors. The vicinity was knowhas the North Arm of the Grand Prairie. This was the summer of 1818. He built a log cabin and moved over to his land in February 1819. A few words about this pioneer country might be of interest. There was fertile soil, much tall

prairie grass, many wild plums, grapes, crabs, strawberries and blackberries, also pawpaws, persimmons and mulberries. There were many wild animals, also-herds of deer, an occasional bear, foxes and so many wolves they were a great menace; many snakes, wild turkeys, other game birds and bees. The deer, wild turkey, geese and prairie chickens furnished much of the meat for several years for the very earliest settlers. The honey obtained from the bee trees in the woods was an acceptable sweetening for the families of that time. We must not forget the Indians who roamed this land for a number of years after the first settlers came, but did little harm except some stealing. The grand children of this couple loved this incident: one day an Indian came to the kitchen door and demanded food, when Hannah returned with it he had his tomahawk out and threatened her; she picked up an axe and threatened him-he said "Brave Squaw" and went away.

The nursery stock was heeled in and properly set out when spring came.

Some of the tough virgin soil was broken with oxen and some corn and buckwheat planted, the meal of the latter bro't $2.00 a bushel as it was scarce.

In the nursery he planted fruit seeds for new varities and for young trees to graft and bud on, his wife often doing the waxing of the grafts; he increased his stock as fast as possible; he was one of the very earliest settlers but soon other families came in goodly numbers, and he soon had a local trade, often setting out a customer's orchard himself. As time went on he sent out wagons loaded with young trees for sale.

Each wagon had a salesman and a driver. The loads were pulled by four to six oxen as they were good pullers over the terrible swampy roads of that day.

The trips were made in the spring and fall-if a man had no money and he seldom did have, his note was taken or skins of deer or coons were taken in payment as they had a ready sale at the river town of Ft. Harrison. His wagons delivered many thousands of young trees over portions of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Missouri. As his fame grew, customers came to him from a distance of 100 miles in some instances to buy stock at wholesale. Can you imagine what this would mean to a country that had

little fruit except the wild kinds?

In his nursery were apples for all seasons of the year, pears, cherries, plums, quinces, peaches, and grapes. Mr. Curtis introduced a number of new varieties of apples, one named Hannah for his wife.

One variety he brought here was the Milam, a great producer and universal favorite for many years. From 1840 to 1856 there were produced in this county about 40,000 bushels of Milams annually; it was so productive that the farmers could only store them in rail cribs with several inches of straw all around. In 1848 Mr. Curtis filled his cellar and a large apple cave with Milams, then cribbed 2,000 bushels in rail pens, with the straw protection and board cover; they kept perfectly except the outer few inches but in the spring were worth only $.25 a bushel and were mostly marketed in Ft. Harrison as cider-everyone had Milams.

The farmers of the middle of the last century hauled apples in wagons to Chicago, Champaign, Vincennes; almost every farmer had an orchard as in those days the trees did not need spraying for insects as today.

The first log house burned in 1830 and a new one was built-it had a large cellar, two floors and an attic, with windows in the gables.

In later years when a son lived there, girl cousins found great delight in this attic-a place where boxes and trunks with old bonnets and dresses for them to dress up in. At this home there always was a fruit drying house, a cider mill where neighbors could come to make cider. There was a brick furnace with a long copper bottomed pan to make apple butter in. The men would make the cider and boil it down while the women peeled and quartered the apples. Much care was required to prevent the butter from burning as it thickened. It was often late at night when the finished butter was stored in large stone jars or hard wood barrels. Neighbors had the privilege of using the furnace and apple butter time often was a sort of social affair.

The family cooking was done at the open fireplace but for baking there was a brick oven with a thick stone slab to place the pies and bread on.

This oven had two iron doors opening into the kitchen-one for putting bread into oven-the other to stoke the fire box with wood.

Joseph Curtis was active in his nursery until 1845 when ill health caused him to turn it over to his four sons who operated it for a number of years. Two sons became nursery men later.

But he did not ever forget the religious side of life. So in the summer he came here to live he established a class meeting at Col. Mayo's home with seven in attendance; this was in 1819.

This was the first sermon delivered in the county; this was the first religious class meeting in the county and was the beginning of the North Arm Church. Soon the meetings were held in the Curtis home and were continued there for twenty-four years until the building of the first North Arm Church about a mile east of the present one. In 1823, the Conference established a circuit including this home as a regular preaching place. Joseph always was pleased to entertain the circuit riding ministers but if for any reason he failed to appear Joseph delivered a sermon himself.

He was one of the local preachers who assisted at the North Arm Camp Meeting in 1823 and his family attended those held at Camp Chapel for a number of years.

In the Curtis home, Saturday was known as preparation day when bread, meat, and pies were prepared in anticipation of giving dinner to those who came to the services from a long distance-little cooking was done in this home on Sunday.

A short time before his death he was made a trustee of the newly established Methodist academy, which stood where Mayo School now stands. This was in 1851.

This man still lives in the memory of people. A few years ago he was honored over the University of Illinois radio as the first nurseryman in the state. Several times men from west of Illinois in recent years have come here to enquire about his work; his biography is in Bailey's cyclopedia of Horticulture; he is mentioned in local newspapers. In 1939, the Ladies Aid of North Arm, celebrated the 120th

anniversary of the founding of the church, honoring him as founder. The Garden Study Club a few years ago planted a group of flowering crab trees in his honor.

Hannah, in her journal written when she was seventy years old, speaks of the many difficulties and the hard times they endured but they surmounted them and lived to have a comfortable living. They were hopeful always and serene in their outlook on life, always having great faith and trust in God. He died in 1852, at the age of sixty-six, she in 1885, at the age of ninety-five years.

So ends the story of Joseph Curtis, first nurseryman of Illinois.

Written by Sarah Curtis Moss, granddaughter of Joseph and Hannah Curtis.

GIFT: MRS. FRANK MOSS
SUTHERLAND AVE.
PARIS, ILL.

Special Collections Curtis Family

OBITUARY.

Last Monday afternoon from the Baptist church occurred the funeral of Miss Mattie Curtis, daughter of the late Dr. Thomas W. Curtis, and grandaughter of Dr. Thomas Curtis, a pioneer physician of Western Indiana.

She was a happy, hopeful girl—one of those sunny creatures whose very presence is a positive pleasure and whose contentedness inspires comfort in the heart at times when oppressed with mortal heaviness that no words can lighten.

Miss Curtis was an accomplished pianist, and though quite young, has for nearly three years taught music. At the time of her death she was a member of the Senior class of the High School and would have graduated in a few months.

Many hearts will ache that Mattie has been called away just on the dawning of so glorious a womanhood.

"But wherefore weep? her matchless spirit soars
Beyond where splendor shines the orb of day;
And weeping angels lead her to those bowers
Where endless pleasures virtue's deeds repay." Dec 12. 1880

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

REFERENCE
DO NOT CIRCULATE

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

February 16, 1978

Mrs. Florence Ramos
2313 E. 26th St.
Vancouver, Washington 98661

Dear Ms Ramos:

Thank you so much for the check. I am sending copies of the pages of the Will Abstracts I told you about, also a copy of the list of patrons of the Atlas of Knox County, 1880, and some pages from the Pike County History, 1776 - 1976, by McClellan. Since the list of patrons of the Atlas shows that G. W. Curtis of Red Cloud, Decker Twp. was born in Pike County, and came to Decker Township in 1859, I think you should check the Census of 1850 for Pike County.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth R. Merrill

Elizabeth R. Merrill
Local History Division

222 N. 7TH STREET, TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA 47807 • PHONE 812-232-5041 • TELETYPE 810-356-2100

Feb. 8, 1978

Vigo Co. Pub Library:

Dear Mrs. Merril:

Thank you so very much for all of your work in Compiling needed information on my decendents.

You stated that Knox Co. will abstracts contain numerous references to members of the Decker family. Will you please send me copies for which I am enclosing a check. Is there anything else on the Curtis family or do you know how to go about finding any. My fathers name is Alonzo Curtis born in Vincinnes Ind. Feb. ~~18,~~ 21st. 1886

P.S. Will send more money if needed.

Thank you

Florence Ramos

2313 E. 26th St.

Vancouver Wash. 98661

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

January 31, 1978

Ms Florence Ramos
2313 E. 26th St.
Vancouver, Washington 98661

Dear Ms Ramos:

I have found little about George W. Curtis, except that he was in Gibson County in 1840, according to the Census, and in Knox County at one time, probably earlier. I have made copies of pages from the printed Census for Indiana for 1820 and 1830 which contain references to the Decker and Curtis families. I have also copied pages from t History of Knox and Daviess Counties, Indiana, published by Goodspeed in 1886. I noticed that the Knox County Will Abstracts contain numerous references to members of the Decker family, and will make copies if you wish. The usual charge is 10¢ per page for copies made, plus postage. Hope the enclosed will be helpful.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth R. Merrill

Elizabeth R. Merrill
Local History Division.

You would probably do well to get your own library to let you use the Census of Knox County for 1850, as it gives the names of all members of a family, their ages and occupations and place of birth. You could do the research yourself.

222 N. 7TH STREET, TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA 47801 • PHONE 812-232-5041 • TELETYPE 810-356-2100

Jan. 26-1978.

Emeline Fairbanks Mem.
Library.

To whom It May Concern:
I understand I am a decendent of the Decker family for which the town was named. Please send me the name of the founder of Decker. I do not have much information, but here is what I have.

My grandmother was Zemiah Decker who married George Washington Curtis. I have no dates.

If you can not help me will you please advise me how to go about finding out this information.

Thank you

Florence Ramos
2813 E. 26th St.
Vancouver Wash.
98661